Forrest Gump

Film directed by Robert Zemeckis

About Robert:

Robert Lee Zemeckis (born May 14, 1952) is an American filmmaker known for directing and producing a range of successful and influential movies, often blending cutting-edge visual effects with storytelling.

About the film:

Forrest Gump is a 1994 American comedy-drama film directed by Robert Zemeckis. An adaptation of the 1986 novel by Winston Groom, the screenplay of the film is written by Eric Roth. It stars Tom Hanks in the title role, alongside Robin Wright, Gary Sinise, Mykelti Williamson, and Sally Field in lead roles. The film follows the life of an Alabama man named Forrest Gump (Hanks) and his experiences in the 20th-century United States. Themes: Preseverence, determination, resilience, goodness etc.

Plot:

In 1981, at a bus stop in Savannah, Georgia, a man named Forrest Gump recounts his life story to strangers who sit next to him on a bench.

In the 1950s, in Greenbow, Alabama, young Forrest is fitted with leg braces to correct a curved spine, and cannot walk properly. He lives alone with his mother, who runs a boarding house out of their home that attracts many tenants, including a young Elvis Presley (American singer and musician, "the King of Rock and Roll"), who plays the guitar for Forrest and incorporates Forrest's jerky dance movements into his performances. On his first day of school, Forrest meets a girl named Jenny Curran, and the two become best friends.

Forrest is often bullied because of his physical disability and low intelligence. While fleeing from several bullies, his leg braces break off, revealing Forrest to be a very fast runner. This talent eventually allows him to receive a football scholarship at the University of Alabama in 1963, where he is coached by Bear Bryant (an American sports coach), and witnesses Governor George Wallace's (45th governor of Alabama) Stand in the Schoolhouse Door (a historical incident wherein Alabama Governor George Wallace stood in the doorway of Foster Auditorium at the University of Alabama, attempting to block the entry of two African American students, Vivian Malone and James Hood), during which he returns a dropped book to Vivian Malone Jones. Forrest becomes a top kick returner, is named to the All-American team, and meets President John F. Kennedy at the White House.

After graduating college in 1966, Forrest enlists in the U.S. Army. During basic training, he befriends a fellow soldier named Benjamin Buford "Bubba" Blue, who convinces Forrest to go into the shrimping business with him after their service. In 1967, they are sent to Vietnam, serving with the 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta region. After months of routine operations, their platoon is ambushed while on patrol, and Bubba is killed in action. Forrest saves several wounded platoon mates – including his lieutenant, Dan Taylor, who loses both his legs. Gump is awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

At the anti-war March on the Pentagon rally, Forrest meets Abbie Hoffman and briefly reunites with Jenny, who has been living a hippie lifestyle. He also develops a talent for ping-pong, and becomes a sports celebrity as he competes against Chinese teams in ping-pong diplomacy, earning him an interview alongside John Lennon on The Dick Cavett Show, influencing the song "Imagine". He spends the 1971 New Year's Eve in New York City with Dan, who has become deeply embittered. Forrest soon meets President Richard Nixon, who grants him a room in the Watergate Hotel, where he unwittingly exposes the Watergate scandal.

Discharged from the Army, Forrest returns to Greenbow and endorses a company that makes ping-pong paddles. He uses the earnings to buy a shrimping boat in Bayou La Batre, fulfilling his promise to Bubba. Dan joins Forrest in 1974, and they initially have little success. After their boat becomes the only one to survive Hurricane Carmen, they pull in huge amounts of shrimp and create the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company, after which Dan rediscovers happiness and thanks Forrest for saving his life. Forrest returns home to his mother as she dies of cancer. Dan invests in Apple Inc. and the two become millionaires, but Forrest also shares their earnings with the community and Bubba's family.

In 1976, Jenny returns to stay with Forrest, recovering from years of child abuse, drugs, and prostitution. After a while, Forrest proposes to her. She tells Forrest she loves him and the two have sex, but she leaves the next morning. Heartbroken, Forrest goes running and spends the next three years in a relentless cross-country run, becoming famous again before returning to Greenbow.

In 1981, Forrest reveals that he is waiting at the bus stop because he received a letter from Jenny, who asked him to visit her. Forrest is finally reunited with Jenny, who introduces him to their son, Forrest Gump Jr. Jenny tells Forrest she is sick with an unknown incurable virus, and the three move back to Greenbow. Jenny and Forrest finally marry, but she dies a year later. Forrest sends his son off on his first day of school as a feather floats in the wind.

Paragraphs

1. Analyse the character of Jenny Curran. How do her choices and life trajectory contrast with Forrest's?

Ans: Jenny Curran is a complex and troubled character in the story. Unlike Forrest, who is innocent and optimistic, Jenny is haunted by her difficult past. She struggles with her own demons, including an abusive childhood and a tendency to make self-destructive choices. Jenny's life ultimately ends in tragedy, with her dying of an unspecified illness. Forrest, however, lives a long and fulfilling life, surrounded by the people and things he loves. Throughout the story, Jenny's choices and life trajectory contrast sharply with Forrest's. While Forrest navigates life with simplicity and kindness, Jenny's path is marked by pain, confusion, and poor decisions. Despite Forrest's unwavering love and support, Jenny repeatedly pushes him away, unable to escape her own personal struggles.

2. The relationship between Forrest and Lieutenant Dan.

Ans: The relationship between Forrest Gump and Lieutenant Dan Taylor is a significant aspect of the film. Initially, Lieutenant Dan is Forrest's commanding officer in Vietnam. He is a strict, by-the-book leader who is initially frustrated by Forrest's innocence and simplicity. However, as they spend more time together, Lieutenant Dan comes to respect and admire Forrest's kindness, loyalty, and bravery. When Lieutenant Dan is severely injured and loses his legs, Forrest saves his life and becomes his primary caregiver. This experience creates a deep bond between the two men, with Lieutenant Dan becoming increasingly dependent on Forrest. Despite his initial bitterness and resentment towards his disability, Lieutenant Dan eventually comes to terms with his new reality. Forrest's unwavering support and friendship play a significant role in this transformation. Throughout the story, the relationship between Forrest and Lieutenant Dan evolves from a formal, military hierarchy to a deep and abiding friendship. Lieutenant Dan becomes a surrogate brother and father figure to Forrest, offering guidance and support as Forrest navigates the challenges of life.

3. How does Forrest's mother influence his worldview and his ability to navigate life's challenges?

Ans: Forrest's mother, Mrs. Gump, plays a big role in shaping his view of the world. She teaches him simple but important lessons, like "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get." This helps Forrest approach life with a sense of curiosity and adaptability. Mrs. Gump also instills a positive attitude in Forrest. She encourages him to focus on the good things in life, which helps him stay resilient in tough times. She also teaches him the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. This lesson helps Forrest form strong relationships and navigate several social situations. Most importantly, Mrs. Gump provides Forrest with unconditional love and support. This gives Forrest the security and confidence to face life's challenges head-on. With his mother's

guidance and support, Forrest develops a strong sense of self and the ability to navigate life's ups and downs.

Essays:

1. Discuss the central theme of love and relationships in Forrest Gump.

2. Analyse how Forrest Gump uses its titular character to provide a lens through which major historical abd cultural events in the 20rh century are presented.